

## **PORT ST. JOE, FLORIDA**

**AUGUST 6, 2008**

### **SPECIAL MEETING**

The Gulf County Board of County Commissioner met this date in special session with the following member present: Chairman Billy E. Traylor, Commissioners Nathan Peters, Jr., Jerry W. Barnes, Carmen L. McLemore, and Bill Williams.

Others present were: Clerk Finance Officer Carla Hand, Deputy Clerk Leanna Roberts, Chief Administrator Don Butler, Deputy Administrator Lynn Lanier, Human Resource Director Denise Manuel, Grant Writer Towan Kopinsky, Planner David Richardson, Mosquito Control Director Mark Cothran, Solid Waste Director Joe Danford, Road Department Superintendent Bobby Knee, Building Official Lee Collinsworth, Emergency Management Director Marshall Nelson, Public Works Supervisor Gerald Shearer, Animal Control Department Employee Roland Jones, Wewahitchka City Manager Don Minchew, Veteran's Service Officer James Kennedy, Major Bobby Plair, and Sheriff Joe Nugent.

Chairman Traylor called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m., E.T.

#### **HUMANE SOCIETY/ANIMAL CONTROL/TRANSFER FUNDING**

Administrator Butler informed the Board that Humane Society representatives are present to discuss the Humane Society Budget. Humane Society representative Sandy Christy informed the Board that the Humane Society is experiencing a drastic shortage of funding to cover the responsibilities that have been adopted by the organization, stating that more animals are being abandoned due to the current state of the economy, and the Humane Society will need additional funding to continue to operate in its existing capacity. Upon Commissioner McLemore's inquiry, Ms. Christy confirmed that the Humane Society is taking in more animals than the past, and stated that the County is only obligated to pay the Humane Society for the first five days of care. Ms. Christy further stated that animals are euthanized, when a certain census is exceeded. Commissioner Williams stated that the Board funded \$19,000.00 in the last fiscal year toward the Humane Society for the census that was projected. Williams further discussed shifting money from animal control to the Humane Society to assist them in the last two months of this fiscal year, and informed Ms. Christy that the Humane Society budget has been tentatively improved for the upcoming budget. Deputy Administrator Lynn Lanier presented the Board with a document showing the current census of animals that Humane Society has been taking in. Chairman Traylor requested that Ms. Christy remain at the meeting while animal control and the problem of vicious dogs are being addressed. Chairman Traylor discussed several incidents where County citizens have been attacked or chased by vicious dogs. Administrator Butler stated that there is a line freeze in the current Animal Control budget, due to having only one person employed. Commissioner McLemore motioned to transfer funding from Animal

Control to sustain the Humane Society budget for the remainder of this fiscal year. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. Administrator Lanier inquired if the Board will be paying bills as they come in, or if there will be a set monthly amount. Commissioner McLemore stated the Board should pay all the invoices from June to September. The motion then passed unanimously.

### **ANIMAL CONTROL**

Upon Chairman Traylor's inquiry, Administrator Butler confirmed that the County Ordinance regarding vicious dogs cannot be enforced in the Cities, unless the County and City enter into an Interlocal Agreement granting authority to Animal Control. Wewahitchka City Manager, Don Minchew stated that he believes the City Board will be very supportive of an Interlocal Agreement on Animal Control. Commissioner Williams discussed that there should be more than one animal control officer, and stated the importance of changing the policies that define the ability to give citations for dangerous animals. Animal Control employee Roland Jones discussed the current ordinance the County has in place. The Board discussed making changes to the ordinance that will redefine vicious dogs and establish fines for violations. Deputy Administrator Lanier stated that the ordinance cannot be breed specific, but it can be more stringent than it is now. Animal Control employee Jones discussed the process and the importance of registering hostile dogs. Ms. Christy inquired if there was a County-wide ordinance requiring dogs to be on leashes, and the need to enforce that. Commissioner McLemore stated that Attorney McFarland can form a committee and work with the Animal Control officer and the Humane Society to revise the ordinance. Ms. Christy discussed keeping the public educated regarding vicious dogs. Upon Chairman Traylor's inquiry, Administrator Butler stated that the total increase to Animal Control's budget was approximately \$115,000.00. Butler further discussed using collected fines, rather than ad valorem taxes to fund the budget. Commissioner Williams discussed the need for the Board to strongly enforce the ordinance, and stated that the committee should present something to the Board as soon as possible. Norman Alimore appeared before the Board, and discussed the need for enforcing the leash law on the beaches, and stated that he would like for the Board to outlaw all dogs on the beach. Commissioner Peters motioned to restrict any dogs from being on the beach. Commissioner Williams discussed the possibility of designating one section of the beach to be a dog friendly area. The motion failed due to lack of a second. Chairman Traylor stated that he would like to look further into the possibility of designating a specific section of the beach to be dog friendly. Major Bobby Plair inquired if the County would be answering any calls from the City regarding animal control. Administrator Butler stated that the County should continue to work on a limited level with the City until an Interlocal Agreement can be established. Chairman Traylor stated that he does not expect that the cities will agree to the stringent terms of the ordinance. Commissioner Williams stated that the County should continue to respond to calls, regardless of whether or not animal control has jurisdiction to write citations in City limits. Patricia Hardman approached the Board and discussed her concerns regarding restricting animals on the beach. Ms. Hardman stated that many residents chose to live at Cape San Blas because of the pet friendly beaches. She further stated that tourist rent the pet friendly beach houses and condos much more frequently than those that are not. Commissioner Williams stated that he would like to place more money in the Sheriff's budget so that animal control policies can be more strongly enforced. Sheriff Nugent stated that if a second person is hired, his hours

should be from noon until 8:00 p.m. to provide for after hour pickups if needed. Evelyn Alimore approached the Board and discussed concerns with the leash ordinance, stating that there are some conditions listed that exempt owners from keeping voice-trained dogs on a leash. Virginia Moore approached the Board and discussed her concerns with vicious dogs in her neighborhood. Commissioner Peters discussed directing Administrator Butler to find out what a contract with the State Attorney's Office would cost in order to have County ordinances enforced.

### **VALUE ADJUSTMENT BOARD**

Chairman Traylor passed the chair to Commissioner Peters and stated he would like to appoint himself and Commissioner Peters as Board representatives to the VAB. Commissioner Williams motioned to appoint Herman Jones as the Board appointed citizen representative, with Brooke Wooten as an alternate. Commissioner McLemore seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Chairman Peters passed the Chair back to Commissioner Traylor.

### **IOLA ROAD/2008-09 BUDGET**

Administrator Butler recommended that the Board transfer \$35,000.00 to next year's budget for Iola Road to pay engineers. Commissioner McLemore motioned to tentatively do so. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

### **PUBLIC WORKS BUILDING**

Administrator Butler informed the Board that the specifications for the public works building meet all building code requirements, and are DCA approved, contrary to what was suggested in a previous meeting. Upon Administrator Butler's recommendation, Commissioner Peters motioned to continue with the bid process for this building and keep the specifications as they currently are. Commissioner McLemore seconded the motion. Pat Hardman approached the Board and stated that she was wrong, as she was not aware that the building met DCA requirements, but it still does not meet County building code requirements. Building Official Lee Collinsworth stated that although a house could not be built to the bid specifications, mobile and modular structures used as offices are exempt from approval of the Building Official. Solid Waste Director Joe Danford stated that he is disappointed that the Board did not consider that he did adequate research on this. He further discussed that he is working on a short deadline because this building is being paid through grant funds, and he needs immediate direction so he can work to secure that grant money. Chairman Traylor expressed his apologies, stating that the Board was led to believe that these specifications went against building code. Mr. Danford stated that he needs the Board's assurance that if he takes the grant money and pays allowable expenses on the landfill account, that he can carry remaining money in the Solid Waste Budget forward into the next budget year. The motion then passed unanimously.

### **RISH PARK**

Administrator Butler stated that it is not on the agenda for the meeting, but he needs to inform the Board that, though no easement has been signed, he has been given verbal agreement from property owner Tracy Clemmons to bush hog a five foot path to the beach at Rish Park. Chairman Traylor stated that Butler has the authority to go forward with this.

There being no further business, the meeting did then adjourn at 11:24 a.m., E.T.

**BILLY E. TRAYLOR**  
**CHAIRMAN**

**ATTEST:**

**REBECCA L. NORRIS**  
**CLERK**